

**To Exalt Christ;
To Equip, Encourage, Exhort, Edify God's Elect**

**Preparing For Departure: Called to Work
John 16:1-16**

This morning we continue our series of sermons based on John chapters 13-17 which together are known as the **Upper Room Discourse**. These chapters detail John's account of the evening before the crucifixion of Christ. It is a record of the ways in which Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure.

He first showed them in chapter 13 what it means to be *called to serve* by washing their feet but his highest call to serve was as the substitute for sin on the cross of Calvary.

In chapter 14 they were *called to trust* in God and him as he was going to prepare a place for them, promising to come back for them. He told them who he was/is; as the way, the truth the life and the only way to the Father.

In chapter 15 they were *called to remain* in him. Apart from him they could do nothing. They were to remain in his love and obey his commands so his joy would be in them. They were to love each other. He told them, *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends”*, which he was about to do. This morning in chapter 16, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit and him being *called to work*, in order to assist the apostles in them being called to work.

Warning – John 16:1-4

But before he gets to the work of the Holy Spirit he issues a warning to the disciples. In 16:1 Jesus said, - *“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.”* At the end of chapter 15 he had told them of the hatred and persecution of the world toward them so he warned them about going astray.

But will they go astray? In John 15:16 he said that he had chosen them and appointed them to go and bear fruit. Once chosen and appointed by Christ they have work which will be carried out. They were to be his witnesses as stipulated in Acts 1:8 and they were. We are a product of their witness to the gospel. God's plans never change. Remember Jonah.

Jesus told them in verse 2 that they would be put out of the synagogue and if someone killed them it would be looked upon as a service to God. In verse 3 Jesus

said, *“They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.”* Earlier in our series, we mentioned John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and how he began that great systematic, theological and doctrinal work by saying our first need is to know God. When we know God, it directs/governs all of life.

These persecutors did not know God or Christ. The disciples did, but on the pre-Easter side of the cross it was limited knowledge. But, post-Easter, their knowledge would explode. After his resurrection & ascension and the coming and commissioning by the Holy Spirit, they were armed with the full knowledge of Christ. It was based on/in the certainty of the resurrection which affirmed the sacrificial, efficacious work of Christ’s death. They went out fully armed with the gospel.

Sin was dealt with. Forgiveness was now possible by the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit to bring one to repentance & faith alone in Christ alone. Death was dealt with. Jesus’ words in John 6:39, *“I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day”*, guaranteed eternal life for those chosen by God, redeemed by Christ. The warning prepared them to be on their toes, because after Easter Sunday they would be on their feet for Christ for the rest of their lives.

Work – John 16:5-13a

Verses 5-13a deal with the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is not a what or an it, but a who. Even the Oxford Dictionary under ‘person’ refers to the Father, Son & Holy Spirit as, *“three persons in one God.”* They got it right.

In John 16 Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as a person meaning a relationship, a bond. The incarnation, the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us as a person was/is unprecedented. John 6:14. It was God with us. When the Holy Spirit came as promised by Christ, Acts 2:3 tells us, *“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”* That is how the Holy Spirit, how God, how Christ works, individually, personally in/with each person.

Jesus said he would **send** the Holy Spirit. He therefore does not come of his own accord or will but he came as directed. He therefore has a definite call to work. Here we see the cooperation, the unity, the harmony of purpose that exists in the Trinity in their combined work for our salvation.

In verse 7 Jesus said, *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go I will send him to you.”* It is like two elevators connecting heaven and earth. As Jesus went up, the Holy Spirit came down and has remained with us and in us to this very day. He has not gone away.

The work of the Holy Spirit is universal, world-wide but also local and singular. John Calvin wrote, ***“The Holy Spirit being universally diffused, sustains and animates all things in heaven and in earth.”*** So what work was he to do?

In verse 8 Jesus said, *“When he comes he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.”* The Holy Spirit went to work right away. In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit came, on the day of Pentecost and filled each disciple. His tongues of fire rested on each one. Then with the in-filling of the Holy Spirit, Peter preached the gospel for the first time and 3000 people were convicted of their guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. Conviction of guilt in regard to sin convinces each one of their need for righteousness and are made aware of the judgment to come.

The Holy Spirit convicts one of sin because he that is holy confronts he that is unholy. His holiness breaks through and regenerates that person. They are born again as Jesus said one must be in John 3. The new birth brings faith to life.

By that faith one is justified, declared righteous and holy in the sight of God. In Romans 5:1 Paul wrote, *“Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Justification by faith alone in Christ alone declares us righteous and holy before God. It brings us peace with God. Immediately following justification, the Holy Spirit begins his on-going work of sanctification. Sanctification brings a person to a greater and greater degree of holiness, the principle attribute of God & the Trinity. Such is the work of the Holy Spirit, but there is more.

In verse 13a Jesus said, *“When he the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth.”* To be guided into all truth is to know what is real. In John 18:38 Pilate asked Jesus, *“What is truth?”* He did not wait for the answer as truth stood there before him. In John 14:6 Jesus had said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life.”* Truth is central to who Jesus is. There would no greater truth than the death and resurrection of Christ. That is the gospel The Holy Spirit brought that truth through Peter on the day of Pentecost and has brought it ever since and it is why it must be preached every Sunday.

In verse 14 Jesus gave another work of the Holy Spirit, *“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”* What is Christ’s? It is the gospel. The Holy Spirit takes it and makes it known to us. John Calvin concludes verse 14, *“The Spirit enriches us with no other than the riches of Christ, that he may display his glory in all things.”* The riches of Christ are in the gospel. Jesus prepared his disciples by promising to send the Holy Spirit who was called to work, so they could work. *Soli Deo Gloria.* Amen.